

The logo for the Des Moines Register, featuring the text "DesMoinesRegister.com" in a stylized font. The "Des" and "Moines" are in a larger, bolder font, while "Register.com" is in a smaller font. The logo is set against a dark blue background with a subtle pattern.

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## Iowa moves ahead with stimulus-backed projects

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Iowa is moving ahead with 19 road and bridge projects worth \$56 million that will be paid for with newly approved federal economic stimulus money.

Gov. Chet Culver today announced the awarding of contracts for the projects, saying Iowa isn't wasting time putting the federal money to work.

"Creating jobs by investing in our infrastructure is a critical step to turn around our economy," Culver said in a statement.

The Iowa Department of Transportation had opened bids for the contracts on Tuesday, the same day the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was signed into law by President Barack Obama. Iowa's share of the stimulus package totals \$1.9 billion, including \$358 million for road construction.

The 19 initial projects are primarily aimed at replacing worn out bridges or constructing concrete culverts in nine counties, although one \$8 million contract will involve grading a four-lane highway bypass loop around Fort Madison on U.S. Highway 61 in southeast Iowa.

None of the initial work will be performed in the Des Moines area.

DOT Director Nancy Richardson said that by using the federal stimulus money for these "ready-to-go" projects, her department will be able to accelerate or add other highway construction projects to the state's five-year transportation improvement program.

Work will begin on the initial projects as soon as weather permits, Richardson said.

The counties targeted for the 19 projects include: Benton, Buchanan, Clarke, Fremont, Lee, Mills, Monona, Plymouth and Pottawattamie.

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